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الأغذية والزراعة
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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Ninth Session

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CPM Chairperson's Report

Agenda item 6

1. Due to the timetable for posting documents for CPM, I am writing this with several months to go before the end of my term as chair of CPM. Last year I tried to explain a little of how the Bureau worked and I encouraged you all to keep in touch with your Bureau members. We've continued the same pattern of meetings as in previous years. Unfortunately the elected member representing the Near East region has been unable to participate in any Bureau or other meetings.

2. As in previous years the bureau meetings have covered a range of issues, with preparations for the SPG discussion on implementation, preparation of the recommendations I hope we'll adopt at this meeting, consideration of how recommendations should be prepared and considered in the future and progress on registration or renewal of the ISPM 15 symbol. We also receive regular updates on progress in the main areas of the CPM's work – standard setting, capacity development and the communications and information areas.

3. When I was elected chair I said that I wanted to see progress on communications. It remains my view that plant health issues are much more likely to be of long term, rather than short-term, concern, and that throws up the challenge of persuading politicians and resource managers, who generally think no more than a few years ahead, of the need to act and to provide adequate resources for problems that might start as insignificant and not become major for twenty years. Experience in my own country shows that until there is a major problem ministers and senior officials think very little about plant health. Is this because we are doing our jobs too well and so like good civil servants are not causing our Ministers any problems? Or is it because Ministers, like most of the population, lack awareness of the importance of protecting our plants and the consequences if we don't?

4. I remain convinced that we need a major programme of awareness-raising to push plant health into people's minds. We need to grab whatever chances are out there – the pop singer Katy Perry and her distribution of seeds worldwide was one such chance and it is great that the Secretariat, having been alerted by actions taken by our ever-vigilant Australian colleagues, tried to get the world media interested. So I am pleased that we are now seeing some movement on communications; some of you will have been interviewed by the consultants who are carrying out the communications needs

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assessment, as a first step in implementing the communications strategy. But the IPPC Secretariat can't do this on its own - we need all of you to be providing news stories as well as taking action in your countries to interest the media in our activities and getting them to realise that loss of plants means loss of food for animals and humans, loss of environmental and biological diversity, and ultimately the loss of the air that we breathe.

5. Lack of respect of national reporting obligations remains a major concern. We need to identify why many countries are still not meeting their obligations. Is the fear of reprisals from trading partners the main concern, or is it that plant health services will be seen to have failed if they admit to a new pest outbreak? Or is just that some countries don't see the relevance of the IPPC? Associated with this is what could be seen as overreaction by countries in banning all trade from a trading partner on the basis of a single outbreak report. Surely a country should investigate further and allow the reporting country to carry out its research into the extent and number of outbreaks before it concludes that all trade from the country should be banned? However, unless we can all have confidence that when official pest reports are made, they are accurate and up to date, other sources of information will be used on which to base decisions, or the threat from single findings will be exaggerated. Ask anyone who does Pest Risk Analysis whether they use or trust the IPP information.

6. The Bureau has heard updates throughout the year on Standard Setting and in particular the challenges we are facing as we try to develop standards which have a direct involvement of sectors of industry. You will hear that the Standards Committee has found a way forward with the grain standard, but there remain the challenges of explaining why we need a standard and that we are not the enemies of the grain industry. Similarly with sea containers – we see there is a risk but it is hard to demonstrate this to a massive industry, which fears we are going to force up their costs, without firm evidence of pests moving globally. This brings me back to my main theme that lack of appreciation of what plant health is, and how IPPC is trying to protect it, remains a barrier.

7. Turning to the IRSS there have been various surveys, and increasingly the results are being used to determine what the IPPC needs to address in future. So it is good to see that response rates are rising - thank you to all of you who have contributed by completing questionnaires - and the process is becoming more effective. The future of the IRSS will be affected by decisions taken on whether CPM should shift some of its focus to concentrate on implementation issues, and while some funding has been identified to keep it going this is one of several areas where more resources are urgently needed.

8. On Capacity Development, thanks to the work of the Capacity development team we have seen new funds coming in on the basis that capacity building work is a good match to the aims of some donor organisations. The team has many projects in which it is involved and has really risen to the challenge of managing these funds and ensuring value for money. Like last year the team has organised capacity building events in the margins of CPM and it is important that you attend these to get the best use out of your time here.

9. On resource mobilisation – the Coordinator has set a \$1 million target for this year –and you are all requested to help meet this target, either through direct donations or through identifying organisations in your countries or regions that could help. This is all designed to try to get the IPPC onto a sustainable financial basis and ensure we can meet the strategic objectives we set ourselves. Perhaps we should see who has any DSA left at the end of the week and ask for that to be donated!

10. Before concluding I would like to thank the other members of the Bureau for their contribution and support through my two years. I think we've made some progress in that time.

11. Finally I would like to give my thanks to the Secretariat. The Secretariat includes some outstanding individuals who are fully committed to plant health and work long hours and travel many thousands of miles or kilometres to work with member countries throughout the world. They've been a great support during my time as Chair. But they are not getting any younger and I hope ways can be found to help the young gifted temporary staff stay, through permanent contracts, to ensure the continuation of a strong secretariat to support the work of the CPM.

12. And of course there is you, the members, without whose support and contributions in various ways there would be no CPM or active IPPC Secretariat. So thank you!